

From: Tavlarides, Mark <mtavlarides@bgrdc.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 11:24 AM
To: Tavlarides, Mark <mtavlarides@bgrdc.com>
Subject: Support U.S.-Azerbaijan Relations in FY23

Good afternoon,

Co-Chairs of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus Steve Chabot and Steve Cohen have circulated a draft letter (attached) for FY2023 appropriations regarding U.S.-Azerbaijan relations. This letter will be sent to Chair Lee and Ranking Member Rogers of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. The letter does not include any funding requests.

Given your boss's strong support for the U.S.-Azerbaijan relationship, we hope your boss will sign the letter.

To sign the letter, please reach out to Rep. Cohen's office (rachel.citron@mail.house.gov) or Rep. Chabot's office (mark.erste@mail.house.gov).

Best,
Mark

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The Honorable Barbara Lee
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations and Related Programs
HT-2 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations and Related Programs
1036 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

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Dear Chair Lee and Ranking Member Rogers:

As you begin consideration of the FY 2023 State and Foreign Operations bill, we urge you to recognize the strategic value of the U.S.-Azerbaijan partnership in the new global reality.

Azerbaijan has been a long-standing partner of the United States, cooperating on multiple fronts from fighting against terrorism and drug trafficking, to preventing nuclear proliferation, to stabilizing the wider Caspian region. It is also worth noting that Azerbaijani troops were among the last partner militaries to leave Kabul airport, facilitating the evacuation until the very end.

As recognized by European leaders, Azerbaijan will be a key partner in replenishing the potential energy shortage in Europe that may occur from Russian aggression against Ukraine. Moreover, Azerbaijan continues to be a major energy supplier for our mutual ally Israel, despite open threats and covert action by Iran. These threats have ratcheted up since Azerbaijan took back control of its border with Iran. As threats in the region increase, especially those towards energy infrastructure in the Caspian Sea, it is vital for the United States to explore opportunities for further assistance in border security, maritime security, and non-proliferation to Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, as the world watches the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it is worth noting that Azerbaijan has provided significant humanitarian aid to Ukraine during this trying time, an exception among former Soviet non-NATO countries that led Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to publicly thank the President of Azerbaijan for this courageous step.

In light of our partnership and shared interests with Azerbaijan, and the United States' good relations with the countries of the South Caucasus, the U.S. must remain ready to help the region achieve an enduring peace. Therefore, we believe that the U.S. should participate in demining activities and refrain from any initiative that could undermine the trust we have built with the region.

In this context, we believe that any U.S. assistance or humanitarian aid programing for areas within the internationally-recognized borders of Azerbaijan should be coordinated with or run through the Government of Azerbaijan. It is important that any program in these territories is in line with the United States' support for the principle of internationally recognized territorial integrity.

Sincerely,